

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 30, with the following amended paragraph:

The containment sheath can be configured with a continuous single diameter from end to end. However, the material of the sheath can be different in different sections of the sheath. A stent ~~retention retraction~~ portion of the sheath adjacent to the compressed stent retention section 78 is constructed of a material having a lubricious inner surface having a low coefficient of friction so the stent graft 60 contained therein slides easily out during deployment as the sheath 52 is retracted. The material of the stent ~~retention retraction~~ portion of the sheath 52 having the desired frictional qualities has been generally found to be soft and susceptible to scoring and the creation of surface irregularities as the containment sheath 52 is retracted and the stent graft 60 is deployed. If the scoring and other surface defects on the inside surface of the stent ~~retention retraction~~ portion of the containment sheath 52 were to reach the location of the fixed seal 72 of the catheter 34, then the scoring and other surface irregularities on the inner surface of the sheath would create a leakage path ~~[[a]]~~ for the fluid being contained by the seal, and the seal would leak. Therefore, an intermediate section identified as a stent retraction portion of the containment sheath 52 (initially positioned adjacent to a sheath retraction section 80 of the catheter body 34 is made of a material whose surface is less susceptible to scoring and the introduction of other surface defects than the softer surface finish material of the stent retention portion of the sheath. If the catheter was kept straight, then the presence of the sheath retraction portion of the catheter would assure that the inside surface of the stent retention portion which may be scored or have other surface defects as a result of its contact and rubbing against the self expanding stent graft, can never occur. During deployment the stent cup plunger 66 acts as the end of a block (anchored by the fixed seal mount 73 through the anti kinking spacer) which prevents the stent graft 60 from moving proximally. However, if the distal portion of the stent graft assembly were severely bent prior to or during deployment of the stent graft, it is possible that the unreinforced tubular wall structure of the stent retraction portion of the containment sheath 52, corresponding to the sheath retraction section 80 of the catheter body 34, may buckle or kink. Such a buckling or kinking could create surface irregularities due to the migration of material~~[[,]]~~ were plastic deformation to occur, even if the catheter was to subsequently be straightened out. Further, if the buckled or kinked area was present during deployment, the narrowed diameter of the containment sheath at that point would create binding between the containment sheath 52 and the fixed seal structure, which would make it difficult if not impossible to further retract the sheath. To reduce or completely eliminate the possibility of such

buckling or kinking [[a]] an anti-kinking spacer 82 is provided around the sheath retraction section 80 of the catheter body 34 and within the stent retraction portion of the containment sheath 52 to maintain the radial spacing between the two. The anti-kinking spacer 82 is in one embodiment a weak helical spring having the weak axial qualities similar to the well known children's toy known as a Slinky.RTM. (e.g., as shown in FIG. 7). While not preferred, it simply could be a ~~simply~~ thick cross section helical spring. Another configuration of the spacer is shown in FIG. 8, where the cross sectional thickness of the individual windings is a tapered section 84, where the thickness closer to the central axis of the spacer is a thicker portion 85 that tapers to with a thinner portion 86 ~~section thickness~~ farther away from the central axis of the spacer. As can be seen in FIG. 11, the gap between the inside of the containment sheath 52 and the radial edge of the spacer 82 is about 0.030-0.040" (0.762-1.016 mm), however since the spacer is weak and flexible this radial gap may be considered a total radial gap which varies between the inside the outside edge of the spacer in the radial direction (the inside edge gap being between the catheter body 34 and the inside edge of the spacer. The diameter of the catheter is typically 7 French, while the diameter of the containment section is in the range of 18-25 French. The spacer can also be a stack of washers which are loosely positioned around the sheath retraction section 80 of the catheter body 34, or the spacer can be a series of washer like or helical ribs in a flexible liner material, such as an annular bellows structure, but without the requirement of pressure containment, though a pressurized annular structure might also be used, but would not provide the assurance of kink resistance that washer and helical structures do.